Date: 09 October 2026
Our ref: 557117
Your ref: TR050008
IP Ref: [redacted]

Submitted via 'Have your say' portal

Customer Services
Hornbeam House
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T 0300 060 3900

Dear Sir/Madam,

NSIP Reference: TR050008

Natural England's Written Representations in respect of Oxfordshire Strategic Rail Freight Interchange

Examining authority's submission deadline: 13th October 2026

Natural England is a non-departmental public body. Our statutory purpose is to ensure that the natural environment is conserved, enhanced, and managed for the benefit of present and future generations, thereby contributing to sustainable development.

For any further advice on this consultation please contact the case officer [redacted]@naturalengland.org.uk) and copy to consultations@naturalengland.org.uk.

Yours faithfully,

[redacted]
Senior Officer
Thames Solent Area Team
Natural England

Natural England's Written Representations

Summary and Conclusions of Natural England's advice

Summary of Natural England's Advice

Natural England's position on matters has not progressed since our relevant representations [RR-101].

The proposal includes the direct loss of part of a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) which has ecological and geological features of interest. Although the project has an ecological mitigation plan which includes the creation of replacement habitat, we have some concerns about the assessment procedure and the conclusions of the Environmental Statement in relation to these impacts.

Regarding ecological features, the Applicant has acknowledged these concerns the Applicant's comments on Relevant Representations [PDA-007]. We expect that Environmental Statement: Chapter 6 will be updated to address our concerns.

With regard to the impacts on geological interest features, we still advise that further evidence is required to demonstrate that the proposed mitigation would maintain the stratigraphic integrity and scientific interest of the notified geological feature.

Natural England provided written feedback to a draft SoCG on the 26th August 2026. We are not sure whether this will be submitted at Deadline 1.

We have not produced a principal areas of disagreement (PADS) document.

We have not provided any further comments on the draft DCO and welcome the applicant's responses in PDA-008, which address our comments.

Natural England's advice in these written representations is based on information submitted by Oxfordshire Railfreight Limited (The Applicant) in support of its application for a Development Consent Order (DCO) in relation to the development of a Strategic Rail Freight Interchange (SRFI) ('the Project').

Natural England will develop these points further as appropriate during the examination process. We may have further or additional points to make, particularly if further information about the Project becomes available.

Our comments are set out against the following sub-headings which represent our key areas of remit as follows:

- International designated sites
- Nationally designated sites
- Protected species
- Biodiversity net gain
- Nationally designated landscapes
- Soils and best and most versatile agricultural land
- Ancient woodland and ancient/veteran trees

- Connecting people with nature (National Trails, open access land, and England Coast Path)
- Other valuable and sensitive habitats and species, landscapes, and access routes

Our comments are flagged as red, amber or green:

- **RED** are those where there are fundamental concerns which it may not be possible to overcome in their current form.
- **AMBER** are those where further information is required to determine the effects of the Project and allow the Examining Authority to properly undertake its task and or advise that further information is required on mitigation/compensation proposals in order to provide a sufficient degree of confidence as to their efficacy.
- **GREEN** are those which have been successfully resolved (subject always to the appropriate requirements being adequately secured)

International designated sites – GREEN

Natural England's position regarding internationally designated sites has **not** changed since submission of our relevant representations [RR-101]. Natural England agree with the HRA screening conclusions and advise that further appropriate assessment is not necessary.

Nationally designated sites – AMBER

Natural England remains of the view that further detail needs to be provided to demonstrate that the notified features, as listed in the citation, will be adequately protected or replicated during the works. Further detail provided in PDA-007 does not demonstrate this will be the case.

We appreciate that the detailed designs are still in preparation and that much of this information is therefore likely to follow. However, Natural England would encourage the further detailed designs to include appropriate figures, such as stratigraphic logs and maps, detailing the succession at the level of individual stratigraphic members.

Cox and Sumbler (2002[1]) detail the protected geological features within the bounds of the Ardley Cutting and Quarry SSSI. While these features are best exposed in the cutting, they extend beyond the White Limestone Formation and represent a complete Bathonian succession across the SSSI, from the basal Horsehay Sand Formation through to the Cornbrash Formation. We would therefore encourage the further detailed designs to clearly identify which units in the notified succession will be retained, and to what extent.

Whilst we welcome the proposed enhancement of geological exposure through the renewed and refreshed exposures created during the works, as previously expressed, there remain concerns regarding the proposals being located outside the notified boundary of the SSSI. Given the above, Natural England would welcome further engagement regarding the geological features and would be happy to undertake a site visit to further understand the concerns associated with the proposal.

[1] Cox, B.M. & Sumbler, M.G. (2002). British Middle Jurassic Stratigraphy. Geological Conservation Review Series, No. 26, JNCC, Peterborough, ISBN 1 86107 479 4.

Protected species - GREEN

While Natural England's material position regarding protected species has **not** changed since the submission of our relevant representations [RR-101]. Natural England has provided Letters of No Impediment (LoNI) for great crested newt, badger and bat. Providing that the survey data is maintained and up to date, these LoNIs remain applicable.

Biodiversity net gain

Natural England's position regarding biodiversity net gain has **not** changed since submission of our relevant representations [RR-101]. Please note that Natural England do not carry out detailed reviews of net gain metrics or calculations.

Nationally designated landscapes – GREEN

Natural England's position regarding nationally designated landscapes has **not** changed since submission of our relevant representations [RR-101].

Soils and best and most versatile agricultural land - GREEN

[PDA-007] addresses Natural England's concerns relating to soils and BMV.

Ancient woodland and ancient/veteran trees – GREEN

Natural England's position regarding ancient woodland and ancient/veteran trees has **not** changed since submission of our relevant representations [RR-101].

Rights of Way, Access Land, National Trails – GREEN

Natural England's position on rights of way, access land, or national trails has **not** changed since submission of our relevant representations [RR-101].

Other valuable and sensitive habitats and species, landscapes and access routes – GREEN

Natural England's position on other valuable and sensitive habitats and species, landscapes and access routes has **not** changed since submission of our relevant representations [RR-101].